Reference Switch and Bad Dubbings

June 3, 2020

Abstract

The causal-historical theory of reference offers a plausible answer to the question of what it is in virtue of which a particular use of a name refers to a particular thing. A famous problem for causal-historical views involves accounting for reference switch. In this paper, I propose a solution to this problem. Briefly, the solution is to recognize an element of meta-semantic deference even in original uses of a name. We are accustomed to recognizing deference in derived uses of a name: my use of 'Peter', for instance, refers to a particular apostle partly in virtue of the referential successes of other members of my community. The extension of this idea to the case of original uses is less familiar. Despite its unfamiliarity, I will urge the view that an original use of a name may, and sometimes does, refer to a particular individual in virtue of the linguistic conventions governing the originator's linguistic community together with the referential successes of other members of that community. This may seem a somewhat incredible view. But it emerges naturally from a consideration of certain other puzzles that have not, I think, gotten the discussion they deserve.

The causal-historical theory of reference offers a plausible answer to the question of what it is in virtue of which a particular use of a name refers to a particular thing.[1] According to a rough and ready version of the causal-historical

[1] This formulation presumes that proper names are singular terms, whose semantic function is to refer to a particular thing. There is a dispute in the literature concerning whether they should instead be treated as predicates; see [Jeshion, 2015] and [Leckie, 2013] for discussion and references. This dispute is orthogonal to the issues discussed in the paper. If proper names turn out to be predicates, then the question that occupies us here will turn out to be what it is in virtue of which a particular thing is in the extension of a given name. I will continue to presume that proper names are singular terms, trusting the reader to adjust my formulations as necessary if names turn out to be properly treated as predicates.

theory, the answer to this question takes one of two forms, corresponding to two types of uses of the name. Most uses of proper names are *derived* from previous uses; the remainder of uses are *original*. On the causal-historical theory, a derived use refers to a particular individual in virtue, roughly, of the fact that it is derived by a chain of use-transmission from an original use of a name to refer to that individual. In virtue of what, then, do original uses of names refer to what they do? The founding philosophers of the causal-historical theory, Donnellan, Kripke, and Putnam, did not offer a definitive answer to this question, but it is often assumed that a broadly *descriptivist* view will serve [Kripke, 1980, 96]. On such a view, an original use of a name refers to an individual in virtue of that individual's satisfying the descriptive condition associated with the use by the originator.

A famous problem for causal-historical views of this sort involves accounting for reference-switch. The canonical example is Evans's example of 'Madagascar' [Evans, 1973, p. 30]). Evans, relying on an account by Isaac Taylor [1898], notes that Marco Polo's use of 'Madagascar' was derived from a use of that name or some ancestor by Arab or Malay sailors. According to the story, Marco Polo mistakenly thought that the sailors' use referred to an island off the coast of Africa, when in fact it referred to a portion of the African mainland. His use of 'Madagascar' is the one from which our present-day use is derived. Needless to say, your latter-day use of 'Madagascar' refers to the island. But the sailors' uses did not refer to the island. Somewhere along the way, the reference of 'Madagascar' switched. How, though, is the causal-historical theory to account for the switch? Answering this question is the 'Madagascar' problem.

In my view, the 'Madagascar' problem is one of the most serious facing the causal-historical theory. In this paper, I propose a solution to this problem. Briefly, the solution is to recognize an element of *meta-semantic deference* (or *deference*, for short) even in original uses of a name.

A case of *deference*, in the sense I am using the term, is one in which the conditions in virtue of which a use of a name refers to an individual include the fact that other members of my community have uses of expressions that refer to that individual; in cases of deference, my referential success is explained by appeal to the referential successes of others. For instance, on the causal-historical view, my derived use of 'Peter' refers to a particular apostle partly in

virtue of the referential successes of other members of my community.[2]

We are accustomed to recognizing deference in derived uses of a name. The extension of this idea to the case of original uses is less familiar. Despite its unfamiliarity, I will urge the view that an original use of a name may, and sometimes does, refer to a particular individual in virtue of the linguistic conventions governing the originator's linguistic community together with the referential successes of other members of that community. This may seem a somewhat incredible view. But it emerges naturally from a consideration of certain other puzzles that have not, I think, gotten the discussion they deserve.

Before I dive in, however, I want to add a short word on what my aims are. I am not proposing to offer a case for this response to the 'Madagascar' problem that appeals to those who are not already sympathetic to the causal-historical theory. So, for instance, nothing I say here should persuade a descriptivist that there is an element of deference in original uses of proper names. Instead, I will mostly be *assuming* that some version of the causal-historical theory is true, and trying to work out the version that offers the best response to the 'Madagascar' problem.

1 The Problem

Let's start by more clearly delineating the problem. Causal-historical theorists have known from the beginning that the rough characterization of the theory I offered above is not right. It is incorrect to claim that any use of a name refers to whatever turns out to be the referent of the use of a name from which it is causally derived. Kripke illustrates this point by imagining that I overhear someone else discussing Napoleon Bonaparte, the historical emperor of France, and am inspired to give the name 'Napoleon' to my pet aardvark [Kripke, 1980, 97]. My use of 'Napoleon' is derived from a use that refers to the emperor of the French. But my use of 'Napoleon' refers, not to the emperor, but to the aardvark.

[2]My use of the term 'deference' differs from the usual use of the term, on which one defers by virtue of associating a condition with one's use that appeals to the uses of experts, sources, or other members of one's language-using community [Jackson, 1998]. On the causal-historical theory, my use of 'Peter' refers partly in virtue of the referential successes of others, but not in virtue of any associated condition, even if, as it happens, that condition appeals to others' uses. "Deference" in my sense should also be distinguished from epistemic deference to experts as might occur, *e.g.*, in the course of an inquiry.

In effect, Kripke is suggesting that not just any old way of deriving a use of a name from another use of a name will serve to determine reference. So, the account of reference for derived uses needs to be refined a bit. Instead of distinguishing flat-footedly between intuitively derived uses and original uses, we should distinguish instead between those uses that have been derived by a *reference-preserving* chain of use-transmission and those uses that have not. A reference-preserving chain of name-use transmission is one in which every use in the chain refers to the same thing as the use which precedes it. Let's agree to reserve the term "derived" for the former uses, and call all other uses "original," including those which are "derived" in some intuitive sense. The material adequacy of this version of the causal-historical theory is thereby assured. But the explanatory burden of the causal-historical theory is not yet discharged, for we need to know what makes it the case that a chain of transmission is reference-preserving. Kripke proposes a partial answer, in the form of a necessary condition on reference-preservation: a use-transmission is reference-preserving only if the recipient intends to refer to whatever is the referent of the source use [Kripke, 1980, 97]. Because appropriating 'Napoleon' as a name for my aardvark does not meet this necessary condition, the derivation of my use of the name is not reference-preserving.

In fact, I don't believe that Kripke's response to the aardvark problem is correct.[3] Even if it is, however, it is clear that it is not adequate as a response to the 'Madagascar' problem. For, in the case of 'Madagascar', the necessary condition is satisfied. Everyone along the chain of use-transmission intended to use 'Madagascar' to refer to the same area as the source use does.

If Kripke's necessary condition on reference-preservation were promoted to a necessary and sufficient condition, then the 'Madagascar' case would be a straightforward (and, to my mind, compelling) counter-example to the resulting causal-historical theory. No proponent of a causal-historical theory, however, has ever, to the best of my knowledge, even suggested that it be promoted to a necessary and sufficient condition. So, we don't have a straightforward counter-example to any version of the causal-historical theory. Still, we do have a serious problem, for the theory's explanation of reference is crucially

[3]See §4.3 below for one worry. Another is that the proposed necessary condition on reference-preservation requires more linguistic sophistication than plausibility allows; see [REDACTED]. Something in the neighborhood of the proposal, however, is plausible: a chain is reference-preserving only if (and partly because) the recipient does not intend to introduce a use of a name for something other than the referent of the source use.

incomplete. Somewhere along the line, the use of 'Madagascar' was transmitted to someone in a way that did not preserve reference. But we have no specification of what it is in virtue of which reference-preservation failed. So, we don't yet have an answer to the question of what it is in virtue of which our latter-day uses of 'Madagascar' refer to the great African island.

In fact, there are two related gaps in our explanation. Let's focus on the very first use of 'Madagascar' for the great African island. We'll call the person who deployed that use *Speaker 0*. Perhaps Speaker 0 is Marco Polo.[4] Perhaps it is someone else.[5] In any case, our latter-day derived uses of 'Madagascar' refer to the great African island in virtue of being derived from Speaker 0's original use of the name for that island. So, the transmission of 'Madagascar' to Speaker 0 was not reference-preserving, and, moreover, Speaker 0 originated the use of 'Madagascar' as a name for the great African island. So, to complete the explanation of reference, the causal-historical theorist needs to answer two questions: (*i*) in virtue of what was the transmission of a use of 'Madagascar' to Speaker 0 not reference-preserving; and (*ii*) in virtue of what was Speaker 0's use of 'Madagascar' an original use of the name for the great African island? These two questions are related in an intimate way. It is plausible to think, and I will assume, that the transmission of a use of 'Madagascar' to Speaker 0 failed to preserve reference in virtue of the fact that Speaker 0's use of 'Madagascar' originated our contemporary use of the name for the island.

So, the crucial question is, what makes it the case that Speaker 0 originated a use of 'Madagascar' for the great African island? Let's assume, for illustration, that Speaker 0's first use of 'Madagascar' for the island was when they inscribed in their diary

(1) Madagascar is the great island off the coast of East Africa

(or whatever sentence in Speaker 0's language is thereby translated). Then what they wrote is true, even though they made a mistake *by their own lights*: they meant to be referring to whatever their source referred to, and they did not

[4]If Marco Polo's first use of 'Madagascar' did not originate the use of that name for the island, then it may be vague which use was first. In the main text I am prescinding from such vagueness. Even so, leading theories of vagueness are consistent with the claim that it is determinate that some use was first. For instance, on a supervaluational account [Keefe, 2008], "some use of 'Madagascar' was an original use of that name for the great African island" turns out to be determinately true. Similarly, on an epistemicist view [Magidor, 2018], it is determinately the case that someone's use of 'Madagascar' was the first such use for the island.

[5]This is the view Burgess [2014] develops.

succeed in doing so. Speaker 0 was also mistaken in another way: they certainly did not intend to originate a new use of 'Madagascar'. Speaker 0 thought they were deploying a derived use. So, Speaker 0's intentions in the case aren't what makes their use original.

Once we have clearly in view the problem posed by the 'Madagascar' case (and by the phenomenon of reference-switch more generally), we can see reasons for dissatisfaction with some of the standard responses to the challenge. For instance, it is a commonplace that one may inadvertently dub something with a new name when one was attempting to deploy a derived use of a name, or even not use a name at all. Someone asks me my name, and I stammer in such a way that I produce sounds that we might transcribe thus

(2) I am Flubberdy-Dubberdy.

If the use of "Flubberdy-Dubberdy" as a name for me catches on, then perhaps I might be credited with an original use of that name. Similarly, if I find letters of fire spelling

(3) Welcome to Shangri-La!

at the entrance to a Himalayan valley, I might be credited with an introductory use of 'Shangri-La' when I write in my diary

(4) Shangri-La is a remote valley in the Himalaya

even if the letters of fire are a freak natural phenomenon. It's easy to see, however, what makes these uses of names original rather than derived: there is no name-use from which they are derived. The 'Madagascar' case is more challenging because there is such a name-use from which Speaker 0's use seems to be derived, and Speaker 0 intends to preserve the reference of that source use. So, merely invoking the possibility of an inadvertent dubbing does not solve the 'Madagascar' problem.

One might hope to solve the problem by invoking descriptive conditions associated by Speaker 0 with their use of 'Madagascar'. One might insist, for instance, that Speaker 0 associated with that use the condition *being the great island off the coast of East Africa*, and that the fact that they associated that condition with that use is reflected in their dispositions to identify that island as the referent of the use under appropriate prompting. There are several problems with this proposed solution. First, and most obviously, Speaker 0 also

associated some such deferential condition as *being the referent of my sources' uses of 'Madagascar'* with their use. And, in fact, it seems plausible that their dispositions are such that this condition takes precedence over the other. For instance, it is plausible to think that Speaker 0 was disposed to withdraw their assertion of (1) if they had been presented with evidence of their mistake.

What's more, this response does not comport well with the spirit of the causal-historical view. On that view, the reference of a derived use is determined *positionally*, by appeal to the speaker's actual position in history, rather than by appeal to associated information.[6] On the proposal under discussion, what makes Speaker 0's use of 'Madagascar' original is that they associate information with the use that diverges from the information associated with that use's sources, in the sense that it does not single out the same referent. On the causal-historical theory, the the misinformation that for decades was associated by millions of people with their erstwhile derived uses of 'Columbus' played no role in determining what the referent of those uses was. Speaker 0's case seems relevantly similar to those millions' cases. The causal-historical theory needs a basis on which to distinguish the features of Speaker 0's position from that of an ordinary derived use, in which divergent associated information is irrelevant to the determination of reference.[7] One might be tempted to claim that the difference is that Speaker 0's use is original, while the millions' uses of 'Columbus' are derived. But, of course, that contention won't help with the 'Madagascar' problem, which is to explain what *makes* it original.

A third response, inspired by Evans's view, holds that Speaker 0's use of 'Madagascar' is original in virtue of the fact that the information associated by Speaker 0 with their use has a different source than the information associated with their sources' uses. The dominant source of the body of information associated by Speaker 0 with their use of 'Madagascar' is the island, while the dominant source of the body of information associated by Speaker O's sources with their uses is not [Evans, 1973].

The problem is that this condition does not by itself appear to explain why Speaker 0's use is original rather than derived. Suppose I am ordered by the FBI to track down a fugitive whom they refer to using 'Whitey Bulger'. Following some anonymous tips, I find a man, quickly dash off a description and

[6] [REDACTED]

[7] This issue is identified by [Noonan, 2013, pp. 121-2] as the crux of the 'Madagascar' problem.

photograph of him to the FBI, and am told that the description and photograph fit the target. I follow the man for however long it takes for the dominant causal source of my information to be the man I am following – presumably somewhere between a few seconds and a few years. I gather all manner of information about him. After all of this observation, I write a report in which I inscribe

(5) Whitey Bulger is attending a philosophy conference in London.

Unbeknownst to me, as you have already guessed, the man I am following is an impostor, hired by the fugitive referred to by the FBI agents' uses of 'Whitey Bulger'. In fact, the anonymous tips I followed also came from the impostor. Still, my report is straightforwardly false if the referent of my source's use of 'Whitey Bulger' is not attending a philosophy conference in London. My use of 'Whitey Bulger' in my report is derived, not original, despite the fact that the dominant source of my information is different from the dominant source of the FBI's information.[8]

In fact, if things had gone just a little differently, it would have been natural to conclude that Speaker 0 was in a 'Whitey Bulger' case. Let's continue to assume that the dominant source of Speaker 0's information was the great African island. But, as I suggested earlier, Speaker 0 was almost certainly disposed to correct their use if they had discovered the mistake. That is, if they had discovered very early on that the referent of the source uses was a region of the African mainland, they would have denied that the referent of their own use referred to the island, and so withdrawn the claim inscribed in their diary,

(1) Madagascar is the great island off the coast of East Africa

and replaced it with

[8]This example is adapted from a case due to [PHILOSOPHER]. Notice that the case also causes trouble for Devitt's view [2015]. Devitt holds that, typically, reference for a name is secured by its being *grounded* one or more times in the referent; a name is grounded in an individual iff its use is occasioned by perceptual focus on that individual. On Devitt's view, a use of a name refers to an individual if the preponderance of groundings underlying the use of the name are in that individual. But notice that, in the 'Whitey Bulger' case, increasing the number of reports I make that are grounded in the impostor does not make it more plausible that they are true reports concerning the impostor, rather than false reports concerning the original fugitive. Similar remarks apply to views like Burgess's [Burgess, 2014], on which 'Whitey Bulger' shifts reference so long as I am acquainted with the impostor and have the *de re* intention, regarding the impostor, to refer to him by my use of 'Whitey Bulger'. This claim is implausible in this case. I am acquainted with the impostor, and presumably I have the intention in question. But my reports are still false, and so my uses do not refer to the impostor.

(6) Madagascar is a region of the African mainland.

To get a case like this vividly before your mind, imagine that, just after finishing the inscription of (1), Speaker 0 learned that *no one in the prior history of the universe had ever used the word 'Madagascar' to refer to an island*, and withdrew the claim as a result. In such a case, it would have been very natural to think that they were *correct* to withdraw the original claim, because that claim was *false*. And those of us who picked up the use of 'Madagascar' through a chain leading from Speaker 0's accounts would be using that name to refer to a region of the African mainland.

We have two cases: (*i*) the actual case, in which Speaker 0 deployed an original use of 'Madagascar' as a name for the island, and so their inscription of (1) is true; and (*ii*) a counterfactual case, in which Speaker 0 learned of their mistake and withdrew their inscribed assertion of (1). In the counterfactual case, Speaker 0 apparently deployed a derived use of 'Madagascar', and so the very same inscription of (1) is false. We can partially classify responses to the 'Madagascar' problem by how they propose to treat this pair of cases. Evans's view appears to require that the counterfactual case is one in which (1) is true, and Speaker 0's inscription deployed an original use. On Evans's view, Speaker 0's withdrawal of (1) turns out to have been mistaken. I have argued that this view is implausible, both in the counterfactual 'Madagascar' case and in the 'Whitey Bulger' case. An alternative view holds that, because Speaker 0's deferential dispositions gave rise to the possibility of the counterfactual case, the actual case is one in which Speaker 0's use of 'Madagascar' is not really an original use.

This second view is directly at odds with our stipulation that Speaker 0 (whoever that turns out to be) is the first person ever to use 'Madagascar' to refer to the great African island. It also strikes me as implausible. It seems plausible to think that each link in the chain leading up to my use of 'Madagascar' has deferential dispositions similar to Speaker 0's. I have used 'Madagascar' to teach my children the little I know about the great African island. In particular, I have used 'Madagascar' to tell them that it is an island and that it contains the natural range of lemurs. If you provided me with powerful evidence that I had misunderstood the utterances from which my use of 'Madagascar' was derived, and that those utterances in fact refer to a region of the African mainland, then I would deny that my uses of 'Madagascar' refer to the island and I

would correct my own 'Madagascar' utterances. And, it seems to me, something similar probably goes, not just for Speaker 0, but for every link in the chain of 'Madagascar' transmission between us. Suppose any of us, having just uttered (1), had been told that *no one in the history of the universe* had ever before deployed a use of 'Madagascar' that refers any island. It is plausible to think that each of us is reasonably disposed to deny that our own use of 'Madagascar' refers to an island and to withdraw our assertion. So, all of us, up and down the chain of use-transmission linking Marco Polo's sources to latter-day uses, have exactly the sort of deferential dispositions that Speaker 0 had. And yet, somewhere along the way, Speaker 0 originated the use of 'Madagascar' for the island, despite having that deferential disposition. The second view, which rules Speaker 0's original assertion of (1) false, can't account for the switch of reference by that person, whoever they may have been.[9]

It is plausible to hold that it is indeterminate exactly where reference switched along the chain of transmission of uses of 'Madagascar' from Marco Polo down to the present day. It might be thought that this indeterminacy can be used to defend the idea that the actual and counterfactual cases should be treated in the same way. The thought is that we have various relevant factors pulling in different directions. On the one hand, the causal source of Speaker 0's body of associated information and their non-deferential intentions and dispositions pull in favor of the island's being the referent; on the other hand, Speaker 0's deferential intentions and dispositions, triggered in the counterfactual case, pull in favor of the mainland region's being the referent. Under these circumstances, the response goes, it is determinate that the referent of the inscription of 'Madagascar' is the same in both the actual and counterfactual cases, but it is indeterminate whether the island or the mainland region is the referent.

It is unclear, however, how the appeal to indeterminacy helps. As I have

[9]This kind of case casts some doubt on any account which would tie (semantic) reference switch to speaker's reference, in the sense introduced by [Kripke, 1977]. The speaker's reference of Speaker 0's use of 'Madagascar' is a matter of whom the speaker believes or intends (on this particular occasion) to be the reference of their use of the name. Presumably these beliefs and intentions are common to the actual and counterfactual cases concerning inscriptions of (1). In both cases, presumably, Speaker 0 believes *de re*, of the island, that it was the referent of the sources' uses. In both cases, we may imagine, Speaker 0 both intends *de re* to refer to *a particular island* and *de dicto* to refer to the referent of their sources' uses of 'Madagascar' (or some predecessor name). In both cases, the *de dicto* intention "controls" on this particular occasion: the speaker was disposed, if they had been apprised of the relevant facts (as happens in the counterfactual case), to withdraw their original claim. So, appealing to these beliefs and intentions, which are present in both cases, does not suffice to explain (semantic) reference switch, which occurs in only one.

already emphasized, on some occasion someone, whom we're calling 'Speaker 0', first deployed a use of 'Madagascar' that referred to the island.[10] We may assume that the person in question was disposed to deny that their use of 'Madagascar' referred to an island when informed of the fact that no one in the history of the universe had ever deployed such a use. By construction, that person deployed a use that refers to the island, and no one else in the history of the universe had ever before done so.[11] So, their actual use refers to the island despite their deferential dispositions and despite the fact that the relevant factors pull in different directions. If we accept that the counterfactual case is to get the same treatment as the actual case, then we must, by construction, accept that in the counterfactual case their denial that their use of 'Madagascar' refers to the island is mistaken. This result is implausible.

2 Bad Dubbings

Another idea is needed. I think a fruitful source for the missing idea is consideration of cases where dubbings go wrong in a particular way. It is plausible to think that whoever dubbed Venus with the name 'Morning Star' appealed to some such description as 'the brightest star in the morning sky' to fix its reference. The name was thereby successfully introduced into English (or some precursor language). That use of 'Morning Star' referred to Venus. Its reference was apparently fixed by the description 'the brightest star in the morning sky'. But Venus is not the brightest star in the morning sky.[12] That honor belongs instead, we may suppose, to Sirius. Even so, if we suppose that the originator first deployed her new name by uttering

[10] On leading theories of indeterminacy, there is no particular occasion o which is determinately the first, though it is determinate that some occasion was the first; see n.4. This wrinkle will play no role in our discussion.

[11] Also, no one in the history of the universe had ever *determinately* done so. Suppose, having just taught my daughters that lemurs live in the wild in Madagascar, I were immediately told that no one in the prior history of the universe had ever determinately used 'Madagascar' to refer to an island. I would withdraw my assertion, replacing it with a correction. It is plausible to think that Speaker 0 and everyone else whose use of 'Madagascar' derives from Marco Polo's shares this deferential disposition.

[12] It might be insisted that this use of the definite description is *referential* in Donnellan's sense [Donnellan, 1966]. I think the case can be tweaked so as to render this proposal implausible. Suppose the dubber is being told of a printout from a light meter that is scanning the morning sky. The reporter tells the dubber that there is a highest spike on the printout. Concluding (incorrectly, as it turns out) that that spike was caused by a star, the dubber introduces 'Morning Star' as name for Venus by using the definite description.

(7) The Morning Star is brighter than Sirius

then she thereby spoke the truth. Venus is brighter than Sirius, even though the supposed reference-fixing description does not single out something brighter than Sirius.

This is what I will call a *bad dubbing*. Bad dubbings have three features: (*i*) a speaker introduces a name or other expression into the language, apparently by fixing its reference with a description;[13] (*ii*) the name refers to something; but (*iii*) what it refers to does not satisfy the description. Paradigmatic bad dubbings are cases of linguistic stipulation gone wrong. Imagine that our speaker stipulates that 'Morning Star' is to refer to the brightest star in the morning sky if there is one, and to nothing otherwise. If this is a bad dubbing, then her stipulation succeeds in introducing 'Morning Star' into the language, but the content of the stipulation turns out to be false. Even so, 'Morning Star' somehow acquires Venus as its referent.

Bad dubbings are to be contrasted with two kinds of good dubbing. First, there are good dubbings in which the description in question does not single out anything, and the new name thereby fails to refer. Second, there are good dubbings in which the description in question singles out something, and the name refers to the individual thereby picked out. The bad dubbings differ from both of these kinds of good dubbings, in that the speaker succeeds in referring, but what she refers to does not satisfy the description she used (or attempted to use) to fix the reference.

How widespread are bad dubbings? This is in large measure an empirical question. One might think that they are relatively rare. I am inclined to think that they are especially common in the introduction of new names or other technical terminology in the course of theoretical inquiry, where there are often a confusing array of theoretical presuppositions of the introduction of new terminology, some of which turn out to be false. Almost certainly the introduction of 'limit' into mathematics was a bad dubbing; the epsilon-delta analysis of 'limit' statements was not properly formulated until the nineteenth century.[14] I am even inclined to suspect that the paragon of reference-fixing

[13] I intend to include here cases in which the expression is introduced casually, without any explicit stipulation, but the speaker associates a condition with the introductory use.

[14] Admittedly, this case does not involve the reference of a proper name, but it could easily be adapted to a case that does, if, for instance, a certain name '*e*' was stipulatively introduced as a name for the limit of a certain series.

by description, LeVerrier's introduction of 'Neptune', was a bad dubbing; see [Kripke, 1980, 79n.]. In the first place, it presupposed Newtonian physics. One of the data points for the rejection of Newtonian physics was the nonexistence of any referent for 'Vulcan', which was introduced on a similar basis. Second, the elements of the orbit of the planet hypothesized by LeVerrier turn out to be very different from the elements of the orbit of Uranus. Thus, it has been claimed that it was an accident that there was a planet about 1 degree away from the line of sight along which, following LeVerrier's instructions, an astronomer in Berlin pointed his telescope [Hubbel and Smith, 1992].

Suppose, however, that my suspicion that bad dubbings are widespread is wrong, and that bad dubbings are rare. Still, there are some, and they pose a problem for causal-historical theorists. Bad dubbings never involve derived uses of terms. And, it would appear, they don't refer in virtue of the fact that their referents are singled out by associated definite descriptions. So, our puzzle is, what is it in virtue of which names refer to what they do in bad dubbings? In virtue of what, for instance, does the original use of 'Morning Star' refer to Venus?

As with the 'Madagascar' problem, there are a variety of strategies in the literature to deal with bad dubbings. Since Kripke is a founder of the causal-historical theory and recognized the existence of bad dubbings, it's appropriate to start with Kripke's rather brief aside:

> In [bad dubbing] cases, the description which fixes the reference clearly is in no sense known *a priori* to hold of the object, though a more cautious substitute may be. If such a more cautious substitute is available, it is really the substitute which fixes the reference .... [Kripke, 1980, 80n.]

This gives us at best a partial answer to the question of what it is in virtue of which a name introduced by a bad dubbing refers to a particular thing. There are two ways in which the answer is incomplete. First, Kripke does not claim that a "more cautious substitute" is available in every case, so we don't have an answer that will cover all of the cases. More importantly, even in the cases in which it applies, we don't have an explanation of what makes the more cautious substitute the reference fixer, as opposed, say, to the description explicitly used in the reference-fixing stipulation.

One might advert to the originator's dispositions at the time at which 'Morning Star' was introduced. One might hold, for instance, that the more cautious substitute description is the one that expresses the condition which characterizes the originator's dispositions to identify a referent for the name given enough information about features of the actual situation. So, if the originator knew all of the salient facts about the situation in which she finds herself, the individual she would specify as the referent of the name she is introducing is the referent of that name, and it is so in virtue of her disposition to specify it as such. On this view, the original use of 'Morning Star' refers to Venus in virtue of the fact that the originator was disposed at the time to specify Venus as the referent if she were informed that Sirius is the brightest *star* visible in the morning sky, but that there is a brighter *planet*.

This response does not comport with our actual etymological practice. We do not credit whoever originated 'Morning Star' with introducing a name for Venus because we think she would identify Venus rather than Sirius as the referent if she were better informed. In fact, it seems to me very much an open empirical question as to whether she would have done so. Perhaps, for instance, her dubbing was religiously imbued: she thought that every star was a god, and if she were apprised of the astronomical facts she would have said that 'Morning Star' lacks a referent. Importantly, the fact that the originator of 'Morning Star' is unknown to us is not essential to the case. LeVerrier's introduction of 'Vulcan' is not a bad dubbing. Because no *planet* was explaining the observed precession in the orbit of Mercury, 'Vulcan' fails to refer. But, of course, there was *something* whose presence explained that precession: a warp in spacetime associated with the masses of Mercury and the sun. So, there's a very nearby bad case, in which 'Vulcan' refers to something *non-planetary* that explains the observed precession in the orbit of Mercury. Leverrier died decades before the confirmation of Einstein's theory of General Relativity. Was he disposed to identify the relevant features of the spacetime manifold as the referent of 'Vulcan' if he had known the relevant physical facts? I don't know. I don't think any of us know. Despite our ignorance, we blithely attribute to LeVerrier the introduction of an empty name. So, our actual practices concerning our attributions of reference don't comport with the hypothesis that in bad dubbings reference is fixed by appeal to the originator's dispositions.

I think this constitutes a powerful reason for a proponent of the causal-historical theory of reference to reject the appeal to dispositions. A major part of the body of evidence in favor of the causal-historical view is the extent to which it comports with our ordinary, third-personal attributions of reference.[15] So, it seems to me, a causal-historical theory is substantially less attractive to the extent that its predictions are at odds with those attributions.

Inspired by Evans, one might instead claim that the original use 'Morning Star' referred to Venus in virtue of the fact that Venus is the dominant causal source of the originator's body of information associated with the new name. Again, this seems to me not to get the cases right. Imagine, for instance, that the originator was neither looking at Venus nor pointing to it at the time of the observations that led to the introduction of 'Morning Star'. Instead, she was looking at (and pointing to) the surface of a space mirror reflecting light from Venus for purposes that need not detain us. Then there is no dominant source of the body of her associated information: the sun, Venus, and the space mirror are each sources, with no source clearly more dominant than the other. And yet the introductory use of 'Morning Star' referred to Venus. And, of course, we can take no comfort in the fact that the mirror is just reflecting light from Venus, since, in the actual case, Venus is just reflecting light from the sun (which has the added feature of actually being a star). So, it seems, adversion to dominant causal sources of our associated body of information won't do the trick.[16]

3 A Proposed Solution

Obviously, bad dubbings have features that distinguish them from 'Madagascar'-style cases in which there is inadvertent change of reference. But there is an important battery of similarities, which the solution I propose will exploit. First, and most obviously, the puzzles posed by bad dubbings and 'Madagascar'-style cases both concern the origination of a new use of a name. In both cases the puzzle concerns specifying what it is in virtue of which that original use refers to a certain individual.

In both cases, I have argued, the associated (or, in some bad dubbings, enunciated) condition will not serve to fix the reference because it does not

[15] Classic defenses of versions of the causal-historical view include [Kripke, 1980] and [Donnellan, 1966]. [REDACTED]

[16] This is related to Devitt's '*qua*' problem [Devitt, 2015].

single out the referent. In both cases, we have certain attributions of reference which, I've argued, a causal-historical theorist has some reason to respect. For 'Madagascar', I have stipulated that we are considering a use of 'Madagascar' that refers to the great African island; for 'Morning Star', I have claimed that the originator introduced a new name for Venus. Neither of these attributions appears to turn on what the original users would have done if apprised of the relevant geographic or astronomical facts. So, I've argued, the causal-historical theorist has reason to eschew an explanation of the puzzling features of the cases by appeal to the originator's dispositions to respond to fuller information.

In both cases, the originator could easily and reasonably have regarded the sentences in which the new use is first deployed as false. For instance, Speaker 0's inscription in their diary of

(1) Madagascar is the great island off the coast of East Africa

was, plausibly, a mistake by their own lights. Similarly, for all we know, the 'Morning Star' originator's utterance of

(7) The Morning Star is brighter than Sirius

was a mistake by their lights. Even so, those sentences were true. So, in both those cases, there is a nearby possible world in which the originator immediately discovered the mistake and withdrew those original assertions. That is, both cases have a counterfactual counterpart in which the originator discovers that an associated condition picks out something different than the originator had thought it picked out, and withdraws the original assertion as a result. It is plausible to think that in the counterfactual cases the originator would not have been mistaken to withdraw the claim in question. It would, on the contrary, have been very natural to think that they were *correct* to withdraw the original claim, because that claim was *false*.

Also, in those counterfactual cases, it's plausible to think that no use of 'Madagascar' for the great African island, nor of 'Morning Star' for Venus was ever introduced into the language. If Speaker 0 had withdrawn their inscription of (1) before their accounts were disseminated, then there would have been no use of 'Madagascar' for the relevant island. If the originator of 'Morning Star' had withdrawn their utterance of (7) shortly after uttering it, then there would have been no use of 'Morning Star' for Venus. In this counterfactual counterpart

to the actual 'Morning Star' case, the introduction of 'Morning Star' would not have been a bad dubbing.

In the counterfactual counterparts to the actual cases, the original uses of the names in question would not have referred to what they actually do. So, our answer to the question of what it is in virtue of which the originator's actual uses refer to certain individuals needs to provide a means of differentiating the actual cases from their counterfactual counterparts. We need an explanation of why 'Madagascar' refers the island in the actual case that does not apply to its counterfactual counterpart to yield spurious "explanations" according to which the inscription would refer to the island. Something similar goes for what we have imagined was the actual introduction of 'Morning Star' and its counterfactual counterpart.

Let's concentrate for the moment on 'Morning Star'. To fix ideas, let's imagine that the originator is disposed, on being told the astronomical facts, to stick with her original description and withdraw (7). (Perhaps, as part of some seasonal observance, 'Morning Star' was to be a term for whatever star is brightest, and, for the originator, its being a star was more important than its being brighter than other visible objects.) Then the counterfactual counterpart of the actual introduction is a case in which the originator's use of 'Morning Star' refers to Sirius.

What, then, is the difference between the actual origination of 'Morning Star' and this counterfactual counterpart? The answer seems to be the fact that, in the actual case, the originator stands at the beginning of a certain social practice – call it the *'Morning Star'-Venus practice* – of using 'Morning Star' to refer to Venus. I will call the social practices associated with the use of a name or other expression to refer to something a *referential practice*. The 'Morning Star'-Venus practice is a practice of referring to Venus, rather than, say, Sirius, in virtue of a complex array of facts, including that its participants by and large take assertive 'Morning Star' utterances to be true or false depending on the features of Venus (rather, say, than Sirius); that there are 'Morning Star' experts to whom its participants by and large defer, and who know enough of the astronomical facts to single out Venus as the referent of 'Morning Star', *etc.* This suggests that the originator's use of 'Morning Star' refers to Venus in virtue of being part of (in fact, the original part of) the 'Morning Star'-Venus practice.[17] Notice that in

[17]The present approach is akin to the view explored in [Evans, 1982, ch. 11]. Both views

the counterfactual counterpart of the actual 'Morning Star' origination, there is no such practice. The originator's 'Morning Star' utterance spawns instead either a different referential practice or no referential practice at all. Thus, the proposed explanation does not apply to the counterfactual counterpart to yield the wrong result.

Turn now to the case of 'Madagascar'. We have imagined that Speaker 0's actual origination of 'Madagascar' coincided with their inscription in a diary of

(1) Madagascar is the great island off the coast of East Africa.

The counterfactual counterpart of this origination is a case in which, before their accounts are disseminated, Speaker 0 withdraws (1) and replaces it with

(6) Madagascar is a region of the African mainland.

What is the difference between the actual origination of 'Madagascar' and its counterfactual counterpart? The answer seems to be the fact that, in the actual case, Speaker 0 stands at the beginning of a certain referential practice – call it the 'Madagascar' practice – of using 'Madagascar' to refer to the great African island. The 'Madagascar' practice is a practice of referring to that island, rather than to any region of the African mainland, in virtue of a complex array of facts, including that its participants by and large take assertive 'Madagascar' utterances to be true or false depending on the features of the island; that there are 'Madagascar' experts to whom its participants by and large defer, and who know enough of the geographical facts to single out the island as the referent of 'Madagascar', *etc.* This suggests that Speaker 0's use of 'Madagascar' refers to the island in virtue of being part of (in fact, the original part of)

explain reference by appeal to the fact that the use of a name is part of a referential practice. It differs from Evans's view, however, in many ways. One particularly salient difference is that Evans requires that initiators of a referential practice of using a name N (called "producers" by Evans) be acquainted with the referent of N. As a result, according to Evans, they have a capacity to recognize the referent *as* N, and are in a position to know of that individual that they are N. The case, described in n. 12 above, in which the dubber of 'Morning Star' exploits a light meter shows that originators need not be acquainted with the referent, and need not have a recognitional capacity of the relevant sort. Also, the counterfactual case, in which the originator's utterance of (7) turns out to be false, is easily possible. This suggests that the dubber's belief fails to be *safe* in the sense that a belief formed on the same basis on that very occasion could easily have been false. If such safety is a necessary condition for knowledge, then the dubber's belief fails to be knowledge. See [Neta and Rohrbaugh, 2004], [Sosa, 2000], and [Williamson, 2000] for discussion of a safety requirement on knowledge. Thus, Evans's epistemic constraints on initiators of a referential practice appear at first glance to be too strong. By the same token, the fact that the view I describe does not impose those epistemic constraints appears at first glance to be an advantage.

the 'Madagascar' practice. Notice that in the counterfactual counterpart of the actual 'Madagascar' origination, there is no such referential practice. The originator's 'Madagascar' utterance spawns instead a different referential practice, one whose participants, by and large, take assertive 'Madagascar' utterances to be true or false depending on the features of a region of the African mainland, and whose experts know enough of the geographical facts to single out that region as the referent of 'Madagascar', *etc.* Thus, the proposed explanation does not apply to the counterfactual counterpart to yield the wrong result. On this proposal, the two puzzles have essentially the same solution.

This explanation has features that should be familiar from standard developments of causal-historical theories. If the determination of reference requires that there be a condition associated with a use of a term that singles out a referent, then that condition need not be associated with that use by the speaker. Other members of the linguistic community – those who in the literature are called "experts" – can associate conditions with my use of 'Peter' on a given occasion that single out the relevant apostle. Similarly, if the determination of reference requires a causal link to the referent, then that causal link needn't be in the first instance between the speaker herself and the referent. In the 'Whitey Bulger' case, the causal links between the referent and other speakers secure the reference. In that case, I bear only the most tenuous causal link to the referent, and I bear a much more robust causal link to someone else. In short, the determination of the reference of one's terms involves an element of *deference* to other members of one's speech community. The reference of a use of the name on a given occasion is explained by appeal to the referential successes of other speakers. These features are familiar, but they typically concern the reference of *derived* uses of proper names. My proposal, in effect, is that causal-historical theorists should accept the application of these ideas to *original* uses as well.

4 Objections

4.1 Temporal internalism

So, the proposal I am offering is familiar in many respects. But there is one respect in which it is very unfamiliar. The conditions in virtue of which an original use of a name refers to a particular thing may involve events in the

future of that use. All but one of the acts by which people have participated and will participate in the referential practice in which Speaker 0 participated with their original use of 'Madagascar' had yet to occur at the time of that use. What makes the difference between the actual 'Madagascar' case and its counterfactual counterpart, in which the *very same inscription* does not refer to the island, is what happens after that original use. In the actual case, Speaker 0 remained ignorant. In its counterfactual counterpart, Speaker 0 learns of the mistake and withdraws and corrects the inscription containing that use. This feature of the proposal runs contrary to a plausible view that in the literature is called *temporal internalism.*[18] According to temporal internalism, the reference of a use of a term on a given occasion is determined by facts that are either contemporaneous with the occasion of use or in its past. The determination of reference, according to temporal internalism, is a matter of past history and current events.

Temporal internalism is powerfully intuitive in the abstract. But, I think, as a general claim applying to all uses of proper names it is clearly false. I believe that Kaplan's introduction of 'Newman1' provides a counter-example, since the question of when the 22^{nd} Century begins depends on the timekeeping conventions in force around the end of this century. There may be room for dispute on this particular point, however. For instance, it might be held that Kaplan intended to use the timekeeping conventions in force at the time of his introduction. So, I hereby stipulate that 'Newman2' in my mouth is to refer to the first person born in the 22^{nd} Century according to whatever timekeeping conventions are in force as of 11 PM, 31 December 2099. On December 31, 2012, the island nation of Samoa declared that the International Date Line had moved at midnight, December 29, 2012 from its western side to its eastern side. That declaration appears to have taken effect. Feeling confident that they won't switch back, I advance the following conjecture:

(8) Newman2 will be born in Samoa.

The reference of this inscription of 'Newman2' and the truth of (8), is not fixed by the history of the universe up to and including the moment I inscribed it. In particular, the reference of 'Newman2' depends in part on what decisions people make over the course of this century concerning the position of the International

[18] See [Brown, 2000], [Jackman, 2005], and [Ball, forthcoming].

Date Line. Nevertheless, I have either inscribed something true or something false.[19]

We might be inclined to deny that my use of 'Newman2' in (8) refers, on the grounds that reference requires the right kind of acquaintance or causal rapport with the referent.[20] Suppose we grant this constraint on reference. Then we will need to appeal to some broader notion to play the semantic role that we typically expect reference to play. For, on our supposition, the truth or falsity of (8) cannot be explained by appeal to the referent of 'Newman2'. (8) will (almost certainly) have the truth value it does because of where some particular individual will turn out to have been born. Typically, we would give truth conditions for (8) along the following lines: (8) is true iff it will be the case that the referent of 'Newman2' has the property expressed by the predicate. The restriction of reference to cases in which the speaker has the right kind of acquaintance or rapport with the referent prevents us from offering any account of this sort. So, we need some less restrictive term – 'designation', say – that covers cases like (8) in addition to more familiar cases in which the speaker bears the appropriate relationship to the referent. Let it be so. Those who are attracted to the restrictive conception of reference are invited to substitute 'designation', 'designates', 'designee', *etc.*, for 'reference' and its cognates throughout.

The dependence on future determinants of reference alleged by the proposal I am offering is unfamiliar in the theory of reference. But it is common with other linguistic phenomena. Suppose that on a particular occasion some decades ago, a certain speaker pronounced the vowel sound in 'cat' with a centering diphthong. Whether his utterance is an incipient part of the Northern Cities Vowel Shift may depend on whether and how his apparently non-standard pronunciations influence other speakers. So, whether his utterance is a manifestation of the Northern Cities accent depends on what happens after the utterance. Given that the other linguistic features of an utterance depend on future events, it would be amazing if its referential features did not.

[19] My description here assumes that reference is fixed *now* by what will occur in the future. An alternative view is that reference remains unfixed until its future determinants have occurred. So, what I have inscribed is not *now* true or false. Rather, it will be true or false at some point in the future. None of the arguments I have offered turn on which of these two alternatives is correct. The 'Madagascar' and 'Morning Star' problems are stated retrospectively, so the latter alternative suits the theoretical concerns of this paper very well.

[20] Thanks to [PHILOSOPHER] for suggesting this line of response.

In fact, the failure of temporal internalism for the determination of reference is part of a more general phenomenon characteristic of many social phenomena. So, for instance, *being a turning point* in a political campaign and *starting a war* are each features that an event has partly in virtue of future developments. Thus, the assassination of the Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand in June 1914 started a war partly in virtue of the fact that millions showed up for the military mobilizations that followed. If no one had shown up, there would have been no war.

Finally, no temporal internalist account of reference is going to allow us to distinguish the actual case, in which Speaker 0's use of 'Madagascar' refers to an island, and the counterfactual case, in which it does not. Recall that, in the counterfactual case, unlike the actual case, Speaker 0 is informed just after inscribing (1) that no one in the history of the universe had ever before deployed a use of 'Madagascar' that refers any island. Since the news in the counterfactual case comes immediately after Speaker 0's inscription of 'Madagascar', the two cases are distinguished only by events in the future of Speaker 0's use. All of the facts concerning the past and present of the actual and counterfactual uses are the same in the two situations. Temporal internalism would thus imply that the question of whether Speaker 0's use refers to the island gets the same answer in the two cases. I have argued that this verdict is implausible.

So, on the proposal I have suggested, temporal internalism fails. That is, I think, a surprising result in the abstract. But we can offer compelling counterexamples to temporal internalism, other features of our utterances appear sensitive to events in the future, such sensitivity is characteristic of a wide range of social phenomena, and temporal internalism yields implausible verdicts in the pairs of cases we have considered. So, I don't think the failure of temporal internalism should move us to reject the proposal.

4.2 Circularity

Another cause for worry is the appearance of circularity in the proposal I have offered. On standard developments of the causal-historical theory, the reference of derived uses of proper names is explained by appeal to the reference of original uses. On the proposal on offer, the reference of original uses is explained by appeal to the reference of the uses that constitute participation in the referential practices those original uses inaugurate. Speakers participate in those referential

practices by deploying derived uses. So, it looks as if the proposal is to explain the reference of derived uses by appeal to the reference of original uses, and then to explain the reference of original uses by appeal to the reference of derived uses. This would, obviously, be an objectionably circular explanation of reference.

What the objection shows, I think, is that causal-historical theories need to distinguish, not between derived uses and original uses, but between derived uses and *authoritative* uses.[21] The authoritative uses are those uses whose associated conditions and causal ties to the putative subject matter fix reference. They are the uses that anchor reference. Derived uses are the rest. The reference of derived uses is explained by appeal to the reference of authoritative uses. The reference of authoritative uses is explained by appeal to associated conditions, causal ties to the putative subject matter, and ties to *other authoritative uses* in the same referential practice.

This proposal might be illustrated by appeal to the idea of a vote among uses that constitute participation in a particular referential practice.[22] For every use, there are the descriptive conditions associated with that use. For instance, when I say to you

(9) The Morning Star is a planet

I associate various descriptive conditions with my use of 'Morning Star', including, say, that it is identical to Venus. The descriptive conditions may single some individual out. If they do, then we may think of my use as casting a vote for that individual to be the referent for those uses of 'Morning Star' that constitute participation in the same referential practice. If, on the other hand, those descriptive conditions truly apply to nothing, then we may think of my use as casting a vote for those uses' lacking any referent at all. Finally, if those descriptive conditions truly apply to many things, then we may think of my use as casting a vote for those uses' reference being indeterminate among the things to which the conditions apply. We then weight the vote cast by my use

[21] The view explored in [Evans, 1982, ch. 11] makes a similar distinction between *producers* in a referential practice (whose acquaintance with the referent fixes reference) and *consumers*, who play no role in fixing reference. Evans requires that producers be acquainted with the referent; as I emphasized in n.17, the present view imposes no such requirement. Thus, on the present view, authoritative users of a name like 'Aristotle' may live too late to have any acquaintance with any candidate referent. Likewise, authoritative users of 'Sgr A*', a name for the black hole at the center of the Milky Way [Boehle et al., 2016], may, fortunately for them, lack any acquaintance with that black hole.

[22] The idea of a vote is lifted from [Kripke, 1980, 64-5], who himself borrows the idea from [Strawson, 1959, pp. 191-2].

according to how authoritative it is. Since my use is not authoritative at all, its vote has no weight: it just doesn't matter which conditions I associate with that use of 'Morning Star'. Then, the referent of all of the uses of 'Morning Star' is the winner (if there is one) of the weighted vote of all authoritative uses.[23]

This solves the problem of circularity. But it does raise the question of which uses of a name are authoritative. The specification of the conditions under which a use is authoritative and of which uses are more authoritative than others is likely to be as messy, contested, and vague as with the analogous questions concerning authority in any other social practice. Surely original uses are typically – I'm tempted to say *always* – authoritative. And they are typically *more* authoritative than any later uses, unless later users have information about the putative subject matter unavailable to the originator. (We will discuss these constraints a little more below.) There are surely conventional contexts in which uses are supposed to be authoritative. Naming ceremonies for babies, as when an official asks for the baby's name to inscribe on a birth certificate, are surely such contexts. I am inclined to think that map-making is another such context. Printing the name 'Madagascar' on the part of a map representing the great African island plays a special role in the 'Madagascar' practice. Probably defining a term in a textbook is another. Sometimes, one intends to offer an authoritative use, as when one uses a term when attempting to explain its use to a child or to another person. In fact, in English we have a special intonation we use in speech to mark these sorts of putatively authoritative uses.[24] For instance, I might use special intonation when uttering

(10) *Bachelors* are unmarried men

[23]The vote cast by an authoritative use may be determined by factors other than which individuals satisfy the conditions associated with that use. For instance, the vote may be determined in part or whole by the conditions *in fact enunciated* by the speaker, or by the causal ties that the use and its body of associated information bears to the putative subject matter. The body of descriptive information associated by me with my use of 'Morning Star' bears a variety of causal relations to Venus, its atmosphere, the sun, any space mirrors that may have reflected light coming from Venus, *etc.* Similarly, the *eligibility* of a candidate referent may may help determine the vote cast by a given authoritative use; see [Lewis, 1983, 1984] for canonical expressions of the idea applied to extensions of *predicates*, and [Sider, 2011] for an application of the idea to other syntactic categories. The proposal on offer here is neutral on the question of whether and to what extent enunciated conditions, causal ties, or eligibility compete with associated conditions to determine the vote. Notice that none of these factors, nor all of them in concert, can be the full story about what determines reference, given that they are all invariant between the actual and counterfactual cases involving Speaker 0's inscription of (1).

[24]This point was made to me by [PHILOSOPHER].

to introduce the word 'bachelor' into my daughter's vocabulary. The uses which, like Speaker 0's use of 'Madagascar', introduce vocabulary into a linguistic community that had hitherto been innocent of both the vocabulary and its subject matter are authoritative.

Often, as with other linguistic phenomena, *de facto* influence may make a use authoritative. If, for some reason, a speaker's idiosyncratic pronunciation of 'cat' spreads through the population of urban centers around the Great Lakes, that pronunciation in fact helps set the standard for correct pronunciation in the Northern Cities accent. Similarly, if a speaker's idiosyncratic explanation of the reference of the term 'Madagascar' spreads throughout a community, then that explanation in fact helps set the standard for what 'Madagascar' refers to.

Thus, there are significant elements of conventionality and serendipity in the determination of how authoritative a use is. For this reason, a speaker's use may be authoritative without the speaker intending or knowing that it is. Speaker 0 did not intend their use of 'Madagascar' to be authoritative and probably did not know that it was, but it ended up being so anyway, both because of the conventional authority attaching to the transmission of geographical lore and because of the wide influence their accounts of 'Madagascar' have evidently had. For the same reasons, the degree to which a use is authoritative is not always in one's control. We might imagine that the originator of 'Morning Star' intended that their reference-fixing description be the final word on the reference of the name. It wasn't.

The referential practices in which we participate when we use proper names have fuzzy boundaries. This will give rise to indeterminacies of reference. Kripke's example of a 'Madagascar'-style case is 'Santa Claus'. There was a time in which uses of 'Santa Claus' referred to a certain bishop of Myra. Contemporary uses of 'Santa Claus' do not refer to any historical person. It's plausible to think, however, that this change took place gradually. So there is an old referential practice, in which uses of 'Santa Claus' refer to the bishop of Myra, and a new referential practice, in which uses of 'Santa Claus' do not refer. There may be lots of users of a name pronounced 'Santa Claus' who are borderline cases: they are definitely participating in either the old referential practice or the new one, but it is indeterminate which. Those uses of 'Santa Claus' do not determinately refer to the bishop of Myra, and they do not determinately fail to refer.

Referential practices are as prone to schism as any other cultural practice. This also gives rise to indeterminacy of reference. Imagine that a group of cartographers, discovering Speaker 0's mistake, resolved to use 'Madagascar' as Marco Polo's sources did, to refer to a region of the African mainland. They publish maps with the inscription 'Madagascar' indicating that mainland region. Imagine another group of cartographers insists that 'Madagascar' should be used only to refer to the island, and they publish maps suiting their preference. If this schism persists, we might plausibly recognize two uses of 'Madagascar', *each* derived from Speaker 0's original inscription. On the theory on offer, the question of what Speaker 0's use of 'Madagascar' refers to depends on which of the two referential practices they participated in. So, it may be indeterminate whether Speaker 0's inscription in their diary in this counterfactual case refers to the great African island.[25]

4.3 Constraint

A third objection is that the view implausibly suggests that later authoritative uses are normatively unconstrained. Napoleon's parents named him 'Napoleon'. Members of our community who derive a use of 'Napoleon' from their original use are not free to expropriate a use of that name for anything else. Or rather, they are free to expropriate a use, *e.g.*, for a certain aardvark, but their decision to do so does not affect the reference of Napoleon's parents' use of that name.[26] Plausibly, then, our ordinary ascriptions of reference are such that future, allegedly authoritative uses of names are constrained by the original,

[25]The idea that the reference of uses of a term in a referential practice is determined by a vote of authoritative uses helps clarify the point of attempts by what have come to be called *conceptual engineers* to propose apparently revisionary meanings for terms already in use. Typically such terms are predicates like 'limit', 'parent', 'woman', or 'Black', rather than proper names. However, if the account in the main text were extended to the meanings of such terms, then we can think of conceptual engineers (in at least some cases) as playing a role in the determination of reference similar to the role played by caucus whips in a legislature. They are organizing theorists into a voting bloc that will make it the case that uses of the terms in question *turn out to have had* the referent they ought to have. Thus, on the extension of the view envisioned, there is no tension between the *descriptive* project of correctly stating the reference that the terms (already) have and the *normative* project of showing that it would be best (all things considered) for them to have that reference. Settling the normative question (among legislators) of what the law should be can be a means to settling the question of what the law is. In the same way, settling the normative issue (among authoritative users) of what a term ought to refer to is a means to settling the descriptive question of what it does refer to. See [Cappelen, 2018, esp. pp. 80-1], [Deutsch, 2020], [Haslanger, 2006], and [Pinder, 2019, pp. 4-7] for discussion.

[26]See [Nado, 2019] and [Deutsch, 2020] for relevant discussion. The worry traces at least to [Strawson, 1963], and is a central concern of Jackman's [2005] defense of temporal externalism.

authoritative uses of those names. If future uses stray beyond the bounds of those constraints, then ordinarily we reckon them to be new dubbings of names rather than authoritative uses in the old referential practice.

But it can seem difficult to reconcile the constraint of future uses by original uses with the picture I have painted. On that picture, the original use is just one authoritative use among others. To be sure, it might ordinarily be especially authoritative and so might be assigned a high weight in the vote that determines reference. But, given enough other authoritative uses, there is no reason in principle that the original use cannot be outvoted. It's hard to see how, on the picture I have presented, one can avoid affirming that "anything goes" so far as future uses are concerned.

The first step in responding to this objection is to describe the phenomenon in question in terms friendly to the proposal on offer. Anyone who expropriates the use of 'Napoleon' to give a name, *e.g.*, to her pet aardvark is thereby instituting a distinct referential practice, rather than participating in the referential practice inaugurated by Napoleon's parents. So, though the new use of 'Napoleon' for the aardvark is an authoritative use in *some* referential practice, it is not an authoritative use in *the same* referential practice as the one instituted by Napoleon's parents.

Fair enough, but what is it that *makes* dubbing the aardvark constitute participation in a different referential practice? Perhaps part of the answer is Kripke's insight, that the dubber intended to introduce a new use of 'Napoleon'. I worry that this does not cover all of the cases. I have, of course, heard of Napoleon and participated in the referential practice inaugurated by Napoleon's parents. Imagine that, in full possession of this ordinary bit of historical vocabulary, I want to be given credit nonetheless for having introduced a use of 'Napoleon' for the great French general into the language. So, I attempt to *re-dub* Napoleon with the name 'Napoleon'. I might even do it by appealing to the old use of that name, by stipulating that 'Napoleon' (in my mouth) shall refer to Napoleon. I might take care to ensure that a large number of people hear me make this stipulation and go on to use 'Napoleon'. Despite my intention, it is plausible to think that my attempt to introduce a new name has failed. My uses of 'Napoleon' are as much a part of the referential practice inaugurated by Napoleon's parents as your own, less ambitious uses are. So, merely intending to introduce a new use of 'Napoleon' appears not do the trick.

Rather, I think, dubbing the aardvark constitutes participation in a different referential practice partly in virtue of the fact that the dubber intends to dub something *other than Napoleon* with the name 'Napoleon'. That is, there is a *subject matter* towards which the referential practice inaugurated by Napoleon's parents is directed, and no use of a name is part of that referential practice unless it is directed toward some overlapping subject matter. The boundaries of that subject matter are given, no doubt, by the conditions enunciated by Napoleon's parents when they gave him the name, the conditions they associated with their use of the name, the causal source of the body of information that they associated with that name, and, perhaps, the eligibility of candidate referents; see n. 23. If a use of a name is not at all authoritative, then it is directed toward whatever subject matter the authoritative use or uses from which it is derived are directed. If a use of a name is authoritative, however, then the subject matter towards which it is directed is given by the same features of the use as give the subject matter toward which the original use by Napoleon's parents was given: the associated information, its causal origin, eligibility, *etc.* If there is no overlap between the subject matter toward which an authoritative use of 'Napoleon' is directed and that toward which the putative original use was directed, then the later authoritative use cannot constitute participation in the same referential practice.

Notice that the subject matter towards which an authoritative use is directed should not be identified with the individual singled out by either enunciated or associated conditions. Bad dubbings are enough to show that enunciated conditions can and sometimes do single out something other than the referent. When later astronomers correct the misconceptions on which the 'Morning Star' originator's dubbing was based, their authoritative uses of 'Morning Star' are directed toward a subject matter that overlaps the subject matter toward which the originator's use was directed, despite the fact that the conditions they enunciate do not single out anything that overlaps with what's singled out by 'the brightest star in the morning sky'. The case of 'Madagascar' suggests that associated conditions can and sometimes do single out something other than the referent. I've supposed that Speaker 0 associates a deferential condition with their use of 'Madagascar' which singles out a region of the African mainland.[27]

[27]Perhaps, as I've already conceded, this is only a false appearance. Perhaps Speaker 0 associates a condition with 'Madagascar' which singles out the great African island in virtue of being disposed, under cognitively auspicious circumstances and when presented with in-

But their use of 'Madagascar' refers instead to the island. When latter-day cartographers slap the label 'Madagascar' on the regions of their maps that represent the great African island, their authoritative uses are directed toward a subject matter that overlaps with the subject matter towards which Speaker 0's use was directed, despite the fact that the conditions the cartographers associate do not single anything out that overlaps with what's singled out by Speaker 0's associated, deferential conditions.

So, the original use constrains later authoritative uses by establishing a subject matter toward which they must be directed if they are to constitute participation in the same referential practice. I think there is a further constraint, however, imposed by original uses. Imagine now that someone expropriates 'Napoleon', not as a name for an aardvark, but rather as a name for the *undetached exterior* of the great French general. It is clear that this later authoritative use of 'Napoleon' is directed towards a subject matter that overlaps with the subject matter toward which Napoleon's parents' original use of 'Napoleon' was directed. Even so, it would be implausible to think that the later user's decision to expropriate a use of 'Napoleon' for a certain undetached human exterior affects the reference of Napoleon's parents' use of that name. Suppose, for instance, that Napoleon's mother had weighed the newborn Napoleon, and declared

(11) Napoleon weighs 6 lbs., 10 oz.

It would be implausible to think that, if the use of a name 'Napoleon' for that person's undetached exterior caught on, then, with enough authoritative uses, Napoleon's mother's declaration will turn out to have been too high by a factor of five.

So, it seems that there is a further constraint imposed by original uses on subsequent authoritative uses. I think a plausible candidate for this constraint is that the votes associated with subsequent authoritative uses can "outweigh" an original use only if the subsequent users are somehow in a superior epistemic position with respect to the subject matter toward which the uses are directed. Latter-day cartographers' votes count against Speaker 0's vote because they

formation about the history of use (including the *subsequent* history of use), to specify the great African island as the referent of their use. If so, then perhaps the subject matter toward which a use is directed really is to be identified with the individual singled out by associated descriptions. I am, however, highly skeptical that Speaker 0 really did have such a disposition.

have much more complete information about the relevant geographical and etymological facts. Latter-day astronomers' votes count against the 'Morning Star' originator's vote because they have much more accurate and complete information about the relevant astronomical facts. The votes of latter-day users of 'Vulcan' count against LeVerrier's (assuming that LeVerrier would be disposed to say that 'Vulcan' refers to a certain spacetime curvature) because we have a more accurate idea of the physics of gravitation. In all of these cases, it is plausible to think that latter-day users are *correcting* the original users because the original uses were in one way or another based on a misconception. Our imagined expropriation of 'Napoleon' for the undetached exterior of the great French general is not based on a better, more complete, or more accurate conception of the subject matter than Napoleon's parents' uses.

So, the suggestion is, subsequent decisions about how to use a name cannot help determine the reference of original uses if the users do not know better whereof the originator speaks. We ordinarily defer a great deal to the originator's vote because we ordinarily know no better whereof we speak than the originator does. Sometimes, however, we do. And, when we do, our votes may correct the originator's.[28]

As is perhaps already clear, in specifying how the originator's associated conditions and causal-historical position constrain later authoritative uses, I am attempting to limn features of our actual linguistic practices. Clearly, even if what I have suggested is true, the features I ascribe to our actual informal linguistic institutions are contingent. There is clearly a sense in which we could have been born into linguistic communities in which original uses are more (or less) constraining. But we haven't.

5 Conclusion

The vocabulary we use when we do geography, astronomy, calculus, and even philosophy refers to the same things in our mouths as it referred to in the mouths of those terms' originators. We ordinarily think, for instance, that Leibniz's use of 'differential' talk referred to just what our own use of such talk does. If the proposal I have advanced is correct, then this cannot be because

[28] Jackman [2005] emphasizes the importance of this epistemic constraint on overriding an originator's vote.

Leibniz himself enunciated or associated conditions with his use of such talk that singled out the referent. We have no good reason to believe that he enunciated or associated any appropriate condition. What, then, is going on when, in the midst of inquiry, someone introduces some new terminology, and enunciates some condition which is to fix its reference? How, for instance, should we take it when someone introduces 'differential' talk by appeal to conditions involving infinitesimals?[29]

The view I have urged suggests that we take it as an invitation to participate in a referential practice. Suppose someone were to say

(12) Let 'N' refer to the ϕ.

The view on offer suggests that we ought to take this as if the originator of the vocabulary is offering the following invitation:

> Here is a new bit of vocabulary that I think we will find useful. I think it refers to the ϕ. I will go on to use this new term to ascribe to its referent some features I think the referent has. Please join me in reasoning for now on the presumption that N has a referent, and that the referent is uniquely ϕ. Let's investigate together. Information may come to light that that presumption leads to trouble of some sort. If so, then some revision may be called for. I may not be there to help you decide how to revise the presumption, or whether, alternatively, to give up use of 'N' altogether. Please do the best you can.

References

Derek Ball. Relativism, metasemantics, and the future. *Inquiry*, forthcoming.

A. Boehle et al. An improved distance and mass estimate for Sgr A* from a multistar orbit analysis. *The Atrophysical Journal*, 830:17, 2016.

Jessica Brown. Against temporal externalism. *Analysis*, 60(2):178–188, April 2000.

[29] In non-standard analysis, as it turns out, 'derivative' talk can be interpreted in terms of conditions involving infinitesimals [Robinson, 1966]. But these are not the conditions laid out, *e.g.*, in calculus textbooks.

John P. Burgess. Madagascar revisited. *Analysis*, 74(2):195–201, April 2014.

Herman Cappelen. *Fixing Language: An Essay on Conceptual Engineering*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK, 2018.

Max Deutsch. Speaker's reference, stipulation, and a dilemma for conceptual engineers. *Philosophical Studies*, 2020. doi: 10.1007/s11098-020-01416-z. URL `https://doi.org/10.1007/s11098-020-01416-z`.

Michael Devitt. Should proper names still seem so problematic? In Andrea Bianchi, editor, *On Reference*, pages 108–143. Oxford University Press, Oxford UK, 2015.

Keith Donnellan. Reference and definite descriptions. *Philosophical Review*, 75 (3):281–304, July 1966.

Gareth Evans. The causal theory of names. *Aristotelian Society Supplementary Volume*, 47:187–208, 1973.

Gareth Evans. *The Varieties of Reference*. Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1982.

Sally Haslanger. What good are our intuitions? *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society Supplementary Volume*, 80(1):89–118, 2006.

John G. Hubbel and Robert W. Smith. Neptune in America: Negotiating a Discovery. *Journal for the History of Astronomy*, 23:261–291, 1992.

Henry Jackman. Temporal externalism, deference, and our ordinary linguistic practice. *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*, 86(3):365–380, September 2005.

Frank Jackson. Reference and descriptions revisited. In James E. Tomberlin, editor, *Philosophical Perspectives: Language, Mind, and Ontology*, volume 12, pages 201–18. Blackwell Publishers, Boston MA and Oxford UK, 1998.

Robin Jeshion. Referentialism and predicativism about proper names. *Erkenntnis*, 80:363–404, 2015.

Rosanna Keefe. Vagueness: Supervaluationism. *Philosophy Compass*, 3:315–324, 2008. doi: 10.1111/j.1747-9991.2008.00124.x. Accessed on 2020/05/05.

Saul Kripke. Speaker's reference and semantic reference. In Peter French, Theodore Uehling Jr., and Howard Wettstein, editors, *Contemporary Perspectives in the Philosophy of Language*, pages 6–27. Univeristy of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1977.

Saul Kripke. *Naming and Necessity*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1980.

Gail Leckie. The Double Life of Names. *Philosophical Studies*, 165:1139–60, September 2013.

David Lewis. New Work for Theory of Universals. *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, 61:343–377, December 1983.

David Lewis. Putnam's Paradox. *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, 62:221–236, September 1984.

Ofra Magidor. Epistemicism, Distribution, and the Argument from Vagueness. *Noûs*, 52:144–170, March 2018.

Jennifer Nado. Conceptual engineering, truth, and efficacy. *Synthese*, 2019. doi: 10.1007/s11229-019-02096-x. URL `https://doi.org/10.1007/s11229-019-02096-x`.

Ram Neta and Guy Rohrbaugh. Luminosity and the Safety of Knowledge. *Pacific Philosohical Quarterly*, 85:396–406, 2004.

Harold Noonan. *The Routledge Guidebook to Kripke and Naming and Necessity*. Routledge, London, 2013.

Mark Pinder. Conceptual engineering, metasemantic externalism, and speaker-meaning. *Mind*, 2019. doi: 10.1093/mind/fzz069. URL `https://doi.org/10.1093/mind/fzz069`. fzz069.

Abraham Robinson. *Non-standard analysis*. North-Holland Publishing Company, Amsterdam, 1966.

Theodore Sider. *Writing the Book of the World*. Oxford University Press, 2011.

Ernest Sosa. Skepticism and contextualism. *Philosophical Issues*, 10:1–18, 2000.

P. Strawson. Carnap's views on conceptual systems versus natural languages in analytic philosophy. In P. Schlipp, editor, *The Philosophy of Rudolf Carnap*, pages 503–518. Open Court, La Salle, IL, 1963.

P.F. Strawson. *Individuals: An Essay in Descriptive Metaphysics*. Methuen, London, 1959.

Isaac Taylor. *Names and their Histories: A Handbook of Historical Geography and Topographical Nomenclature*. Rivingtons, London, 1898.

Timothy Williamson. *Knowledge and its Limits*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK, 2000.